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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers [REDACTED]

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23 July 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH : National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM : Assistant NIO for Latin America

SUBJECT : Monthly Warning Assessment: Latin America

1. Cuba

Photography reveals an unusual concentration of airlift capacity at Playa Barracoa Airfield (just west of Havana) where Cuba's elite para-troops are headquartered. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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But there is at least a small chance the move reflects growing Cuban preoccupation with potential developments in Nicaragua, with which Havana has a secret defense pact. The Sandinistas do fear a major stepup of actions by armed dissidents/exiles (though this is not deemed likely now), and Cuba almost certainly would send help in quelling disorders. Analysts are continuing to pay close attention to any and all potential indicators both in Cuba and Nicaragua. [REDACTED]

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2. El Salvador

Private sector criticism of the Christian Democrats is becoming more shrill. This sort of continuing discord, along with government inability to make real inroads against the guerrillas, appears to have seriously demoralized junta President Duarte. The latter, in a recent [REDACTED]

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conversation with a visiting US official, evinced uncharacteristic pessimism. Friction among moderate groups is hampering the preparation for next year's elections, and may yet embolden military and civilian rightwing extremists, always eager to exploit any opportunity to scuttle the electoral process altogether. [REDACTED]

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3. Honduras

The security forces are adopting increasingly aggressive tactics, both against political figures on the extreme left and against common criminals. The tougher tactics reflect concern over domestic terrorist acts, the subversive and military intentions of Nicaragua, the guerrilla war next door in El Salvador, and the increase in ordinary crime. Death squad activity is picking up; at least one political prisoner has been executed; and the security forces reportedly have permission to eliminate anyone who perpetrates a terrorist act. Most Hondurans appear more or less indifferent at this point. There is some danger, though, that if the tough tactics escalate further, they could induce a cycle of retaliation and recrimination that would involve many more Hondurans and affect the country's relative social peace. [REDACTED]

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4. Nicaragua

The unexpected departure of Vice Minister of Defense Eden Pastora comes at a particularly bad time for the Sandinistas. Pastora left, he said, to resume being an active revolutionary elsewhere--presumably in El Salvador or Guatemala. The departure is fueling speculation in and out of Nicaragua about just how bad growing splits among the Sandinistas really are, as well as recriminations within the regime over the handling of the Pastora issue. Moreover, his vow to make revolution elsewhere adds to the fears and suspicions of neighboring Guatemala and Honduras, and could embolden Nicaraguan exile groups. [REDACTED]

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5. Argentina

President Viola's immediate prospects appear slightly improved, but intractable political economic problems continue to plague him. His authority is undermined by the military junta that selected him, and he appears to lack the political toughness to do more than temporize. Key labor and political groups--long sidelined by the military governments--are becoming more restive. If Viola fails to keep civilian pressures within "acceptable" limits, he could find himself in serious trouble with fellow officers who are not prepared to accept the reemergence of major civilian influence. [REDACTED]

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